# SARON MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Saron Evangelical Lutheran Church (ELCA)
510 Main Street
St. Joseph, Michigan 49085

Website: www.saronlutheran.org
Email: info@saronlutheran.org
Phone: 269-983-1273
Facebook:www.facebook.com/saronlutheranchurchst.joseph

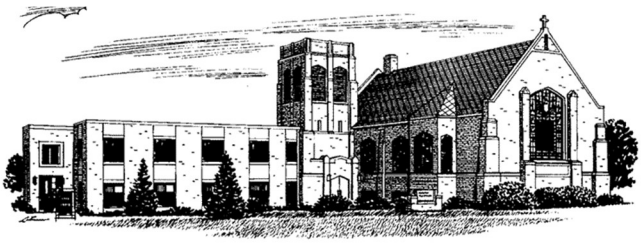
The Rev. Joan Oleson, Pastor
Home: 269-983-2475
Email: oleson@saronlutheran.org
Patrick Blanchard, Vicar
Cell: 616-460-7150
Email: pblanchard13@live.com
Marcus Roll, Music Director
Email: roll1mc@gmail.com
Irma Gorman, Organist
Amanda Bradley, Admin Assistant
Cell: 419-306-5780
Email: info@saronlutheran.org
Bradley717@gmail.com
Megan Savage, Bookkeeper
Email: financial@saronlutheran.org
Emily Gaul, Child Care

**Typical Sunday at Saron:**
Fall, Winter and Spring:
8:30am Worship On-Location
11am Worship with Zoom Option
Nursery Available
9:40 Learning Hour for Ages 2-Adult

Summer of 2022 (beginning June 5):
9:30am Worship
On-Location and via Zoom
Nursery Available
No Learning Hour

*We hold in prayer:*
*The Rev. Elizabeth Eaton,*
*Presiding Bishop, ELCA*
*The Rev. Dr. Craig Satterlee, Bishop of the*
*North/West Lower Michigan Synod, ELCA*
*The Episcopal Diocese of Western MI*

*Our Companion Synods:*
*Christian Lutheran Church of Honduras*
*Lutheran Church of Papua New Guinea*
*Lutheran Church of Latvia*
Saron's Mission: *Joyfully sharing God's love for all!!*



**PASTOR JOAN'S ARTICLE FOR APRIL 2022**

I'm not one who typically reads the last chapter of the book first. But as Christians, we know the end of the story. It is resurrection. Christ's resurrection. During the Lenten season, we intentionally wait. We reflect. We live with the mark of ashes on our foreheads. But we do so with hope and the assurance of what is to come. And, it is not only the celebration of Christ's resurrection that we anticipate, but our own. Baptized into his death and resurrection, we have the promise that resurrection is also ours. Marked with the cross of Christ forever, we live our lives as one who already has the gift of eternal life. It is ours now, already, as we live in God's abundance, grace, and forgiveness. And we will know it more fully when our earthly lives end and Christ's victory over death is ours and we live in Christ's eternal reign.

With the psalmist, we can rejoice and proclaim, *"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."* Ps 23:6

For that we can all shout, *"Alleluia! Christ is risen! Christ is risen indeed! Alleluia!"*

**Palm/Passion Sunday, April 10**
8:30am on-location & 11am on-location and via Zoom

**Maundy Thursday, April 14**
12:15pm on-location & 7pm on-location and via Zoom

**Good Friday, April 15**
12:15pm on-location & 7pm on-location and via Zoom

**The Vigil of Easter, April 16**
7pm on-location and via Zoom

**The Resurrection of our Lord, Easter, April 17**
8:30am on-location & 11am on-location and via Zoom
(continental breakfast & egg hunt between services)

# General Information

## COVID-19 PRECAUTIONS

As the situation is evolving rapidly, currently for the better, please watch the weekly emails and door signage for an indication of our latest mask protocol. As of printing, we are encouraging masks but are no longer requiring them. Thank you for all the patience we've received during the last weeks and months as we've striven to best protect our most vulnerable congregants.

## OFFICE HOURS

Pastor Joan and/or Vicar Patrick
Monday-Thursday Mornings
Amanda Bradley (Admin Assistant):
Mondays & Thursdays 8am-noon
Wednesdays as needed
Helping Hands Office Volunteers:
Wednesdays 9:15am-11am (approx)
Megan Savage (Bookkeeper):
Tuesdays & Thursdays 5:30pm

When Pastor is out of town, emergency pastoral care information can be obtained by calling the church office (269/983-1273) or contacting the council president.

Note: Emails for Pastor should be addressed to oleson@saronlutheran.org to ensure privacy. Emails to Amanda and the church office should be sent to info@saronlutheran.org.

# Caring and Sharing

## IN OUR PRAYERS

**Richard Schalon** is at the Whitcomb Tower Retirement Center in St. Joseph; **Bernice Koski** is at Woodland Terrace in Bridgman; **Kathleen Preston** is at Woodland Terrace in St. Joseph.

**Happy Birthday Wishes to Saron's Members!**
**April 2022**

4/1 Susan Harris
4/1 Shadden Gulley
4/2 Laura Hicks
4/3 Landen Alexander
4/3 Brian Culverhouse
4/4 Shawn de la Foret
4/4 Elizabeth Gaspari
4/4 Elise Olson
4/4 Margot Olson
4/8 Janet Larson
4/9 Scott Kohs
4/11 Alaina Bradley
4/13 Marilyn Lucy
4/14 Brandon Borr
4/14 Lorelei Gorman
4/15 Corrine Ondraka
4/19 Bob Kynast
4/20 Claudia Staude
4/21 Fritz Knauf
4/22 Addison Osgood
4/23 Juliet Jacob
4/23 Ava Osgood
4/25 Clementine Brueck
4/25 Gayle Peterson
4/26 Michael Breyen
4/26 Thomas Siewert
4/27 Linda Pater
4/28 Brooke Henderson

**Happy Anniversary Wishes to Saron's Members!**
**April 2022**

4/16 Kathi & Terry Anserello

***"God's Blessings for a very happy day and year round!"***

If there are any omissions from the birthday or anniversary list, or if a date is incorrect, please let us know so we can get it correct in the future!

## IN SYMPATHY

We extend our condolences to Katherine and family upon the death of her husband,
**George Smith,**
a former member of Saron.

We also extend our condolences to Cindy Brown and family upon the death of her mother,
**Deana Forbes**.

***God is our refuge and strength.***
- Psalm 46:1a

**BAPTISM AND WELCOME**

Through the act of Holy Baptism, we welcomed Hannah Victoria, daughter of Jackson & Naiara Karl, into the family of Christ on Sunday, March 6, 2022. Hannah's sponsors are Cristiane dos Santos and Alexandre & Julia Karl.

We also welcomed Jackson & Naiara as new members of Saron. Congratulations, Karl family!

FORTIFY & fly

Folding chairs in the sanctuary is not a site you want to see without good reason. Luckily, in this case, it means we did it! All the pews were claimed and are either settled in their new homes or in the process of being repurposed. Below are pictures of actual Saron pews and we look forward to sharing more ways they are being used in the future!

**The new sanctuary seating is due to arrive the week of March 28. As soon as we have more details, we will be asking for volunteers to help unload the truck.**

Besides seating, we're also working on next steps for the worship space (still focusing on function and accessibility) and brainstorming how to attack "Brand Awareness," which may involve a website overhaul. The Technology Task Force is anxiously awaiting the arrival of items for the audio/visual updates in the sanctuary. Exciting times!

At the end of February 2022, we had collected an additional $210 for a total of $374,597 towards our pledge total of $367,205. Every dollar counts. If you have a pledge to fulfill or simply wish to continue giving, we're happy to accept it. Thank you and we hope to see you enjoying the new sanctuary seating soon!

# Worship

**NURSERY**

Nursery service is available during both services. In order to utilize the space most effectively, this option is primarily directed towards our youngest members and guests. For pre-schoolers that occasionally need more physical and/or emotional space, activities are available in the narthex. There are also clipboards with coloring pages, as well as children's bulletins, to assist kids as they transition into participating in worship. **It's vital to embrace having family units in all stages in our congregation and as such, we gladly welcome wiggles and giggles in worship!**

The goal of the nursery is to provide a safe environment to facilitate a meaningful worship experience for families negotiating life with children. We recognize that may not look the same for all and encourage concerns and suggestions.

For health and safety reasons, only the approved childcare providers assigned for that day should be in the nursery space during worship. Nursing mothers are always welcome!

**1st COMMUNION**

We are targeting to celebrate several youth completing the steps to partake in 1st communion on May 1. If you have a child(ren) ready to start the process, it's not too late! Contact Pastor Joan for more information.

**NEW MEMBERS**

We're planning to welcome a group of a new members very soon. Please let Pastor know if you are interested in joining Saron, or would like to learn more about the Christian faith in the Lutheran tradition.

**PRAYER GROUP**

Join us Mondays at 11am for a time of quiet reflection and prayer, which includes lifting up the requests offered on Sundays at worship or via other means. We meet in the sanctuary.

**ZOOM COFFEE HOUR**

We will continue the Zoom fellowship at 11am as long as there is interest. The link remains the same each week and is at the bottom of the email sent on Thursdays.

**ALTAR FLOWERS**

You can sponsor a week by using the link in the weekly email or by calling the church office. Make sure to note any special occasion to be recognized in the bulletin. Flowers are $35 per vase. Please follow up with a check to Saron with "Flowers" on the memo line. Thank you for helping to beautify our worship services! Feel free to take them home after the last service to enjoy. **Please return the vase to Saron to be reused.**

**FACEBOOK**

We often share pictures of Saron's ministry on our Facebook page and we get great feedback. It is our practice not to put names with the pictures. If you have questions, or prefer your picture not to appear, please contact Pastor.

**SUNDAY SCRIPTURE READINGS**

As you prepare for worship, you are invited to read and reflect on the Scriptures for the day.

**April 3: Fifth Sunday in Lent**
Isaiah 43:16-21
Psalm 126
Philippians 3:4b-14
John 12:1-8

**April 10: Palm Sunday**
Luke 19:28-40
Isaiah 50:4-9
Psalm 31:9-16
Philippians 2:5-11
Luke 22:14 - 23:56

**April 17: Easter Sunday**
Acts 10:34-43
Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24
1 Corinthians 15:19-26
Luke 24:1-12

**April 24: Second Sunday of Easter**
Acts 5:27-32
Psalm 118:14-29
Revelation 1:4-8
John 20:19-31

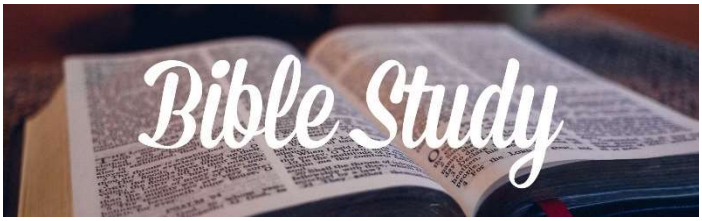
# Youth

Our youth group (grades 6-12) has gatherings scheduled for **March 27, April 10 and May 15 after the 11am worship service**. We're also planning to meet this summer on **Wednesday evenings, 6-8:30pm, on June 22 and July 20**. A service project is in the planning phase. More will be communicated about that opportunity once we have details. We look forward to seeing you! Friends are always welcome.

**Contact Merrily at merrilyannsmith@gmail.com with any questions.**

# Learning

*Saron is a congregation seeking to become more fluent in the first language of faith, the language of Scripture, in order that we might live into our calling as a people renewed, enlivened, empowered and sent by the Word.*




**SUNDAY LEARNING HOUR**

We offer a time of age-appropriate Bible studies between the two services, from **9:40-10:30:**

- **Grades 5 and Under** meet in the Sunday school classroom.
- **Confirmation Students** (Grades 6-8) meet in the confirmation classroom.
- **Adult Forum** meets in the upstairs lounge.

We look forward to seeing everyone!

**TUESDAY EVENING BIBLE STUDY**

We are taking a break during Lent and will return to our studies after Easter on Tuesdays at 6pm on-location at Saron. Looking forward to seeing you in the Spring! **All are welcome!**

*"Iron Sharpens Iron and One Person Sharpens the Wits of Another"*

If you have any questions about this group, feel free to call, text, or email:
**Bob Kynast (269-921-2786, bobkynast@gmail.com) or Don Hafer (269-985-3637, hafer.don@gmail.com).**

**THURSDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY**

**Join us, beginning April 21, for a 6-week study entitled "The Difficult Words of Jesus."** The class will meet in the lounge (hopefully) from **9:30-11am and simultaneously on Zoom**. Cost of the study guide is $13. Contact Pastor for more details or to reserve a book.

From the website - *Jesus provided his disciples teachings for how to follow Torah, God's word; he told them parables to help them discern questions of ethics and of human nature; he offered them beatitudes for comfort and encouragement. But sometimes Jesus spoke words that followers then and now have found difficult. He instructs disciples to hate members of their own families (Luke 14:26), to act as if they were slaves (Matthew 20:27), and to sell their belongings and give to the poor (Luke 18:22). He restricts his mission (Matthew 10:6); he speaks of damnation (Matthew 8:12); he calls Jews the devil's children (John 8:44).*

In The Difficult Words of Jesus, Amy-Jill Levine shows how these difficult teachings would have sounded to the people who first heard them, how have they been understood over time, and how we might interpret them in the context of the Gospel of love and reconciliation.

Please let Pastor know if you ever have any questions or need the Zoom link. **This class is open to all interested in attending.** You are welcome to join any time, for one session or for many.

**1ST SUNDAY BOOK DISCUSSION GROUP**

Join us April 3rd at 6:30pm on-location in the upstairs lounge and simultaneously on Zoom component for those who wish. "The Four Winds" by popular author Kristin Hannah is the book up for discussion. It's been compared to Steinbeck's "The Grapes of Wrath." We will explore why and form our own opinions.

We will finish up our 2021-2022 year on May 1st with "The Midnight Library" by Matt Haig. According to Haig, between life and death there is a library. The books in the Midnight Library enable one to live as if one had done things differently. Curious? Author Jodi Picoult says: "A beautiful fable, another It's a Wonderful Life for the modern age, impossibly timely when we are all stuck in a world we wish could be different." Come share your thoughts. All are welcome and many views are happily needed. To be included on the email list so that you will receive any last-minute meeting changes, please contact Kathy Cowall (269) 428-0354 or kcowall@hotmail.com.

*"A good bookshop is just a genteel Black Hole that knows how to read."* (Terry Pratchett)

**MEN'S MONTHLY DEVOTION**

Saron Men's Devotion/Breakfast will meet:
**April 2 at 9:30am**
**Galley Grill in Stevensville**

Contact Dennis Lundgren with any questions at dennis.lundgren@me.com

# Women of the ELCA

**DEBORAH CIRCLE**

**Deborah Circle will NOT meet in April.** We will be participating in a service project. Details will be emailed.

Contact Melanie McCammon at 269/449-8399 for more information about this group.

# Hospitality

**SUNDAY SNACKS**

Who doesn't love a snack during a time of fellowship in the narthex after the service? If you would like to be a Sunday snack host, sign up via the link in our weekly email or call/email the office so Amanda can sign you up. We are asking for donations of individual, store-packaged treats at this time. Please plan for 30 to partake. Thank you!

# Outreach

**NOISY OFFERING**

We receive a noisy offering (or those not-so-noisy bills) on the first Sunday of each month. These gifts are sent to ELCA World Hunger. Thank you for your generous offerings!

**BENTON HARBOR SOUP KITCHEN**

*Simple food, honestly sourced and lovingly made creates connections, gives fuel to the fight, and starves ignorance and apathy.* – Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen

On February 24th, Saron members Deb Standon, Kate Ulrey, Jim Manore, and Liz Kunkel were busy at the Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen preparing and packing 130 sack lunches. The lunches included cookies which were provided by Beth Gray-Roll, Keith Stevens, Kathi Anserello, Pat Breyen, and Lindsay Gaspari.

If you feel comfortable helping to prepare a sack lunch at the Soup Kitchen or providing cookies, please use the link in the weekly email to sign up or contact Kathie Bradley at 269/921-4665.

Thank you to all who continue to support this ministry with your time, contributions, and prayers: *Joyfully sharing God's love for all!*

**INCLUSIVITY TASK FORCE**

The Inclusivity Task Force is committed to extending a welcome to all. Our congregation adopted the following welcome statement and is a **Reconciling in Christ** church.

**As a community of faith who *joyfully shares God's love for all*, we believe our lives and faith are strengthened by diversity. We strive to be a community who welcomes people of every ability, age, citizenship status, ethnicity, gender identity and expression, language, marital status, political perspective, race, and sexual orientation. We are committed to the work of racial equity. Whatever life's circumstance, we openly welcome and value you. We celebrate God's unconditional love and respond joyfully to your presence here. All are welcome. You are welcome.**

*How does bias impact our welcome?*

**Join us in May for a training entitled "Bias & Its Impact on Welcome."**

Bias is part of our lives and ministries. This training will invite participants into exploring how bias impacts welcome, creativity, and innovation for our lives and ministries. Watch for more details!

You will see the RIC logo on various communications and signage for our church. Watch for more updates about our continued inclusivity journey!

If you ever have any questions or need clarification, please feel free to call any one of the task force members:
Connor Ashley: cashley1837@outlook.com
Laurel Gacek: 269/470-6062 or mlmg2445@sbcglobal.net
Laura Hicks: 517/930-0579 or lhicks42@gmail.com
Darlene Kiessel: 269/313-4062 or kiessel@me.com
Diane Madej (Open Hearts. Open Church): 231/670-0328 or dianemadej234@gmail.com
Pr Joan Oleson: 269/983-1273 or oleson@saronlutheran.org

**INTERFAITH ACTION**

Interfaith Action

Interfaith Action (swmichiganinterfaith.org) is a coalition of over 40 faith communities in Allegan, Berrien, Cass, St. Joseph, and Van Buren Counties. Some members of Saron attend meetings and work with various task force groups. One of the goals of Interfaith Action is to promote understanding and respect for diversity.

**Check out the Interfaith news bulletins at swmichinterfaith.org/bulletins**

## Support

The Support Committee will be meeting on the second Tuesday of each month at 8pm. Meetings will continue to be held on Zoom. Contact Don Hafer with any questions at 269/985-3637.

**STOCK DONATIONS**

Saron partners with TD Ameritrade, a brokerage firm, to accept stock donations. If you would like to donate stock, email Joe Ulrey at josephulrey@yahoo.com to receive more information. Thanks!

## Facilities

**HELPING HANDS (Previously Golden Hammers)**

We do all sorts of things from building maintenance to preps for worship in the sanctuary to assembling bulletins and newsletters and so much more. We meet on Wednesdays around 9am and know you are invited – whatever your age, gender, or ability. There is a job for you to use your helping hands.

SARON LUTHERAN CHURCH
510 MAIN STREET
ST. JOSEPH, MI 49085

Website: www.saronlutheran.org
Email:info@saronlutheran.org

A Congregation of:
The North/West Lower Michigan Synod
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

**APRIL 2022 NEWSLETTER**

We're updating the bulletin board at the base of the stairs with current photos so new members and guests can get better acquainted with our congregation.

**Please participate by sending a fun or serious, indoor or outdoor, photo to be posted with your name(s) to bradley717@gmail.com or text to 419/306-5780.**

We've already received a bunch but we'd like to include everyone! If you would like us to take a photo, ask a staff member after worship. Easter could be a great opportunity!

# APRIL 2022

| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | **1** | 2<br>9:30am Men's Monthly Devotion/Breakfast at Galley Grill |
| 3<br>8:30am Worship<br>9:40am Learning<br>11am Worship with Zoom Option | **4**<br>11am Prayer Group | **5** | **6**<br>9am Helping Hands<br>11am Zoom Coffee<br>7pm Lent Service with Zoom Option | **7**<br>6pm Bells Rehearse<br>7pm Choir Rehearse | **8** | 9 |
| 10<br>8:30am Worship<br>9:40am Learning<br>11am Worship with Zoom Option | **11**<br>11am Prayer Group | **12**<br>8pm Support Meeting | **13**<br>9am Helping Hands<br>11am Zoom Coffee | **14**<br>12:15pm & 7pm Maundy Thursday Worship<br>**NEWSLETTER ARTICLES DUE** | **15**<br>12:15pm & 7pm Good Friday Worship | 16<br>7pm Easter Vigil |
| 17<br>8:30am Worship<br>9:40am Continental Brkfst & Egg Hunt (No Learning)<br>11am Worship with Zoom Option | **18**<br>11am Prayer Group<br>7pm Council Meeting | **19**<br>6pm Bible Study | **20**<br>9am Helping Hands<br>11am Zoom Coffee | **21**<br>9:30am Bible Study<br>6pm Bells Rehearse<br>7pm Choir Rehearse | **22** | 23 |
| 24<br>8:30am Worship<br>9:40am Learning<br>11am Worship with Zoom Option | **25**<br>11am Prayer Group | **26**<br>6pm Bible Study | **27**<br>9am Helping Hands<br>11am Zoom Coffee | **28**<br>9:30am Bible Study<br>6pm Bells Rehearse<br>7pm Choir Rehearse<br>**Benton Harbor Soup Kitchen Day** | **29** | 30 |